

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSC-05 PM-04 SP-02 INR-07 CIAE-00
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/060 W

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R 280708Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6923
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
USCINCEUR
COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 5961

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, KU, IZ
SUBJ: KUWAIT-IRAQI BORDER DISPUTE

REF: KUWAIT 5500

1. I HAVE DISCUSSED THE CONTINUING IRAQ-KUWAIT BORDER PROBLEM BRIEFLY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD AL-JABER AL-SABAH DEC 27. SABAH AL-AHMAD RESPONDED TO MY INQUIRY CONCERNING PRESENT STATUS OF DISPUTE BY SAYING THAT LITTLE HAD CHANGED WITH IRAQIS STILL REMAINING IN THOSE BORDER AREAS INSIDE KUWAIT WHICH THEY HAD ENTERED LAST SEPTEMBER.

2. HE SAID PROSPECT OF KUWAITI TROOPS STATIONED FACE TO FACE
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WITH IRAQIS WAS UNPLEASANT BUT ALL GOK DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS HAD FOUNDERED ON IRAQI INSISTANCE ON ACHIEVING LEASE RIGHTS ON OVER HALF OF BUBIYON ISLAND.

3. CONTRARY TO PREVIOUS EXPRESSIONS OF GOK ADAMANT POSITION WITH RESPECT TO LEASING OF ANY PRESENT KUWAITI TERRITORY,

SABAH AL-AHMAD SAID THAT GOK WOULD BE WILLING TO LEASE WARBAH ISLAND TO THE IRAQIS AND EVEN A SMALL STRIP OF COASTAL TERRITORY NEAR THE IRAQI BORDER BECAUSE THEY RECOGNIZED THAT WARBAH WAS SITUATED IN A COMMANDING POSITION OVER IRAQ'S UMM QASR PORT. HOWEVER, THE GOK WAS COMPLETELY UNWILLING TO CONSIDER LEASING ANY PORTION OF BUBIYON ISLAND, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS NOT SUITABLE FOR HABITATION, BECAUSE OF ITS COMMANDING POSITION OVER KUWAIT'S HARBOR.

4. SABAH AL-AHMAD PROFESSED HIMSELF AS UNABLE TO FATHOM IRAQI MOTIVES IN THIS MATTER, BUT SAID THAT KUWAIT WOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE ALL REASONABLE EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE MATTER. ANY AGGRESSIVE ACTION BY IRAQ, WHICH HE DID NOT RULE OUT, WOULD CERTAINLY BE A SHOCK TO THE ARAB WORLD AND WOULD COMPLETELY SET BACK ARAB UNITY.

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